

**Claims**

- 1       1. A formulation comprising at least one anesthetic compound selected  
2           from the group consisting of procaine, lidocaine, tetracaine and salts thereof;  
3           and a skin penetration enhancer, and a gelling agent in an anhydrous mixture.
  
- 1       2. The formulation of claim 1 wherein said skin penetration enhancer is at  
2           least one compound selected from the group consisting of: benzyl alcohol,  
3           propylene glycol, and ethoxydiglycol.
  
- 1       3. The formulation of claim 1 wherein at least two skin penetration  
2           enhancers are present.
  
- 1       4. The formulation of claim 1 wherein said at least one anesthetic  
2           compound is present in said formulation from 1 to 25 total weight percent.
  
- 1       5. The formulation of claim 3 further comprising a third skin penetration  
2           enhancer.
  
- 1       6. The formulation of claim 1 wherein said at least two anesthetic  
2           compounds are procaine, lidocaine and tetracaine, or salts thereof.
  
- 1       7. The formulation of claim 1 wherein lidocaine is present from 0.5-6 total  
2           weight percent.

1       8.     The formulation of claim 1 wherein said skin penetration enhancer is  
2     present from 0 to 95 total weight percent.

1       9.     The formulation of claim 1 wherein said skin penetration enhancer is  
2     present from 25 to 45 total weight percent.

1       10.    The formulation of claim 1 wherein the gelling agent is a cellulosic  
2     polymer.

1       11.    The formulation of claim 1 wherein the gelling agent is hydroxypropyl  
2     cellulose.

1       12.    The formulation of claim 11 wherein the hydroxypropyl cellulose has a  
2     viscosity ranging between 1000 and 2000 centipoise at 25 degrees centigrade.

1       13.    The formulation of claim 12 wherein the concentration of hydroxypropyl  
2     cellulose ranges from 0.5 – 5 total weight percent.

1       14.    The formulation of claim 1 further comprising a dispersing agent.

1       15.    The formulation of claim 1 further comprising an ingredient selected  
2     from the group consisting of: preservative, fragrance, buffer, and an emollient.

- 1        16. The formulation of claim 1 further comprising a therapeutic agent.
- 1        17. The formulation of claim 16 wherein the therapeutic agent is selected  
2        from the group consisting of: analgesics, anxiolytic compounds,  
3        antiarrhythmics, antibacterials, antibiotics, anticoagulants, anticonvulsants,  
4        antifungals, antihistamines, anti-inflammatories, antivirals, bronchodilators,  
5        calcium channel blockers, cytotoxics and anticancer agents, cytokines, growth  
6        factors, immunosuppressives, muscle relaxants, psychotherapeutics,  
7        sympathomimetics, vasodilators, vitamins, and combinations of these.
- 1        18. The formulation of claim 16 wherein the therapeutic agent is an anti-itch  
2        compound.
- 1        19. A method for reducing pain sensation, the method comprising the steps  
2        of:
  - 3              applying a therapeutically effective amount of an anhydrous gel  
4              anesthetic formulation according to claim 1 to the area of an individual's skin  
5              to be anesthetized; and
  - 6              allowing the gel anesthetic to remain in contact with the area for a period  
7              of time sufficient to reduce pain sensation.
- 1        20. The method of claim 19 further comprising the step of :

2 applying a therapeutically effective amount of anesthetic formulation  
3 comprising a topical anesthetic compound, a skin penetration enhancer and a  
4 volatile co-solvent, to the area to be anesthetized.

1       21. A method for reducing pain associated with the application of laser  
2       energy to the skin, said method comprising the step of applying a  
3       therapeutically effective amount of a topical anesthetic according to claim 1 to  
4       the area of the skin to be treated prior to the application of laser energy.

1       23. The commercial kit of claim 22 further comprising a second topical  
2       anesthetic, said second topical anesthetic comprising a skin penetration  
3       enhancer and a volatile co-solvent.

1       24. A method of local anesthesia comprising the step of applying to intact  
2       skin or oral mucosa the formula of claim 1.